

Attack on Rommerbach

by Maj John F. Schmitt, USMCR

Situation

You are a colonel commanding a task force of roughly battalion strength that includes 2 U.S. Marine light armored reconnaissance (LAR) companies, Alpha and Bravo each with a platoon of antitank variants; a TOW section; and 2 host-nation Marine companies, one a company of 12 M60 tanks, the other a company of mechanized infantry. The host-nation Marines are reasonably well trained and can generally be relied on to accomplish basic tasks with a reasonable amount of supervision.

The terrain is rolling farmland punctuated by small villages and wooded areas. Enemy forces have invaded the host nation from the west. The Combined Marine Forces (CMEF), of which your task force is a part, are advancing generally northwest along Highway 7, clearing the area of enemy forces in order to restore the border. Your task force has been ordered to break off from the Highway 7 axis and advance south-southwest from Jennau through Ostglossen and Glossen to Rommerbach and Schilte to clear any enemy forces in zone. Intelligence indicates that as of 48 hours ago an enemy reinforced mechanized company was reported in Schilte, while Rommerbach appeared to be unoccupied save for periodic mechanized patrols. You will have a battery in direct support along the Highway 7 axis and are told that close air support and Cobras will be available based on priority.

You move out with Alpha in the lead, followed by the mech, tanks, TOWs, and Bravo in the rear. You reach Glossen without any enemy contact. As planned, Alpha moves on Rommerbach while you continue with the mech company, tank company, Bravo, and TOWs toward Schilte. You drop your combat operations center (COC) in Glossen and instruct the tank company to halt just west of Glossen as the battalion reserve.

Radio traffic suggests that 10-12 kilometers north, along the Highway 7 cor-

ridor, a major engagement is beginning to develop. Meanwhile, Alpha reports it is engaging an enemy force of unknown size near Rommerbach. About 2 kilometers east of Schilte, you gain observation of the town and halt to have a look, searching for signs of a defense. Radio traffic now indicates that sizable enemy forces are launching an unexpected coordinated attack along Highway 7 against CMEF which is now on the defensive. CMEF warns you to be alert for major enemy offensive activity. You should not expect much in the way of aviation support since all available air is now being vectored to the developing battle. CMEF instructs you: "Imperative you secure Rommerbach and Schilte and hold those positions in order to protect CMEF's left flank." Through your binoculars you see signs of a prepared defense in Schilte, but the enemy strength is unclear. You maneuver your mech, TOWs, and Bravo into attack positions outside of Schilte. Alpha now reports it has driven six reconnaissance vehicles from Rommerbach and is con-

solidating the town. Your COC reports that your tank company does not seem to be occupying its designated assembly area, and the Bravo CO reports that the tanks have continued with the column and are directly in trace of him.

Your first indication that something more is up with Alpha is a fire mission called against an enemy mech battalion west of Rommerbach. Shortly after that, the Bravo company commander comes on the command net to report that he has reached the west edge of Rommerbach to discover that a sizable force of mech and armor is closing on Rommerbach from the west: “A battalion, at least, in assault formation. Lead elements inside 3 clicks and closing.” You can now hear the sounds of tank main guns echoing from the north. What do you do, Colonel?

Requirement

In a time limit of 5 minutes, describe any actions you will take in the form of orders you will issue or requests/reports you will make. Then provide a sketch of your plan and a brief explanation of your actions. Submit your solution to *Marine Corps Gazette*, TDG #98-10, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or fax 703-640-0823.

